

Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning
Policy for School Bus Driver Certification
May 2009

The 1977 Indiana General Assembly enacted Public Law 123 mandating the training and certification of school bus drivers. In conjunction with the Indiana State School Bus Committee the following policy statement is used by the Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning to implement the training and certification requirements of the statute.

Training Requirements

Current requirements for certification consist of preservice classroom instruction, on-bus observation, and behind-the-wheel operation of a school bus. The observation and behind-the-wheel segments are performed under the supervision of an Indiana certified school bus driver and are completed in cooperation with the school corporation or employer. The observation and behind-the-wheel segments are documented in a manner acceptable to the school corporation or employer and reported to the Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning electronically in DOE Online. (<https://dc.doe.state.in.us/doesonline/login.aspx>) By statute, the training provided by the Department of Education may not exceed forty (40) hours. However, each school corporation or employer is encouraged to supplement these requirements with local policy philosophies and procedures.

The training requirements may be completed in any sequence. However, when a trainee is performing any school bus driving function they must possess a Certificate of Enrollment and an appropriate driver's license.

Preservice classes are conducted throughout Indiana and scheduled by the Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning. The class schedule is available at www.doe.in.gov/safety.

Certificate of Enrollment

Purpose

The certificate of enrollment, commonly called a 'blue card', is a temporary training card authorizing the school bus driver trainee to transport passengers while completing the certification process. Statute requires the certificate to be valid and in the driver trainee's possession when transporting passengers. A driver trainer is considered a passenger and the trainee must possess a valid certificate of enrollment to operate the school bus. The certificate is used in conjunction with a commercial driver's license or public passenger chauffeur license.

Obtaining a Certificate of Enrollment

The certificate is issued by the Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning in two ways:

- (a) at the school corporation or employer's request, prior to the trainee attending a preservice class; or
- (b) issued to the trainee at a preservice class.

A certificate requested by the school corporation or employer must include:

- (a) the trainee's legal name as it appears on their driver's license;
- (b) the last four digits of the trainee's social security number; and
- (c) the school corporation or employer's name, address, city, and zip code.

The request may be by mail, facsimile, or E-mail. Telephone requests cannot be accommodated.

Expiration and Renewal

The certificate of enrollment is valid for 180 days from the date of issue.

The request for an extension must be in writing from the school corporation or employer. The request may be by mail, facsimile, or E-mail.

The office reserves the right to limit the number of extensions.

Previously Certified Driver

A previously certified school bus driver is eligible for a one-time only enrollment certificate. It is valid for 90 days from the date of issue. The request must be in writing from the school corporation or employer. For reinstatement of the standard certificate refer to: Standard Certificate, Failure To Attend Annual Safety Meeting.

Standard Certificate

Purpose

The standard certificate, commonly called a 'yellow card', indicates completion of the training requirements, replaces the enrollment certificate, and also authorizes the driver to transport passengers. State statute requires the certificate to be valid and in the driver's possession when transporting passengers. It is used in conjunction with a commercial driver's license or public passenger chauffeur license.

Obtaining a Standard Certificate

A trainee must complete the preservice class, the on-bus observation, and behind-the-wheel operation hours to receive a Standard Certificate.

The observation and behind-the-wheel operation requirements are four (4) and eight (8) hours respectively. The hours must be supervised by an Indiana certified school bus driver and documented in any manner selected by the school corporation or employer. The observation and behind-the-wheel hours must be submitted electronically in DOE Online by the school corporation or employer not later than the one year anniversary of the trainee's attendance at the preservice class.

Expiration and Renewal

Standard certificates expire on December 31 of each calendar year. A driver who attends a preservice class prior to June is required to attend the annual safety meeting. A driver who completes a preservice class after May will be issued a standard certificate valid through December 31 of the next calendar year.

Every school bus driver, including a driver trainee with an enrollment certificate, is required by state statute to attend the annual safety meeting. Attendance at this meeting satisfies the in-service requirement of statute and when applicable re-news the driver's standard certificate for the next calendar year. The standard certificate for each driver is returned to the school corporation or employer shown in the office's database.

A driver may renew the standard certificate for the following calendar year by completing the annual safety meeting in the method chosen by the school corporation or employer.

Failure to Attend Annual Safety Meeting

Notwithstanding the penalty provided in I.C. 20-27-8-14, annual safety meeting; nonattendance; penalty, a person may re-instate the standard certificate by completing the annual safety meeting program, providing the certificate has not been expired for more three consecutive years.

A driver is not allowed to attend the preservice class to re-instate the standard certificate.

A person who has failed to attend the annual safety meeting for three consecutive years is required to complete all training requirements for certification. Refer to: Training Requirements and Certificate of Enrollment.

There is no waiver available from the State School Bus Committee or the Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning.

Grandfathering

Previous experience may be substituted in lieu of training requirements. To be eligible a person must have a minimum of 30 days school bus driving experience in Indiana for a public or non-public school accredited by the State Board of Education. The experience must be within the three years immediately preceding the effective date of the person's assignment as a school bus driver.

Direct inquiries to the Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning.

Persons with school bus driving experience in agencies, not-for-profit organizations, or out-of-state employers are not eligible.

Contacting the Office

Mail: Indiana Department of Education
Office of School Transportation and Emergency Planning
151 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798

Telephone: 317-232-0890

Facsimile: 317-233-0858

E-mail: sts_support@doe.state.in.us

Internet: <http://www.doe.in.gov/safety>

Indiana Code References

- I.C. 20-27-8-9 Annual Safety Meeting; Attendance Required
- I.C. 20-27-8-10 Preservice School Bus Driving Safety Education Training Course
- I.C. 20-27-8-11 Annual Safety Meeting; Time and Place
- I.C. 20-27-8-12 Annual Safety Meeting; Responsibility To Conduct
- I.C. 20-27-8-13 Annual Safety Meeting; Registration
- I.C. 20-27-8-14 Annual Safety Meeting; Non-attendance; Penalty
- I.C. 20-27-8-15 Training Certification
- I.C. 20-27-9-11 Use Of School Buses; Day Care Centers; Developmentally and Physically Disabled Persons
- I.C. 20-5-2-7 Policy Mandate for Criminal History Information of Non-Certified and Contracted Employees